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ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted to determine opinions of teacher educators, state directors, and teachers about the generic curriculum components that should be included in preparation for special education. A 25-item survey instrument was constructed and sent to special education department chairpersons at teacher education institutions, state directors of special education, and a random list of 200 special education teachers. Replies were received from 55 department heads, 25 state directors, and 65 teachers. Results of analysis of variance indicated a high degree of agreement among the three groups at the undergraduate level, with significant differences only in two areas. State directors rated learning theory higher than did teachers, and both state directors and teacher educators rated child development higher than did teachers. There was somewhat less agreement among the groups at the graduate level, where 9 of the 25 items were significantly different. Teachers rated legislation/litigation, parent support, personal development, research methods, educational assessment, and early childhood information as less important for teacher training programs at the graduate level than did teacher educators. When there were differences of opinion among the groups, the difference usually was that teachers rated the item as less important than teacher educators. Items rated most highly tended to be topics with direct classroom applications, such as teaching methods, reading, mathematics, language arts, and behavior modification. An appendix lists rank orders of survey items by group. (Contains 7 charts and 17 references.) (SLD)

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Generic Curriculum Components in Special Education Teacher Education Programs

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For some years now, special education has considered and discussed a number of concepts such as mainstreaming (Berry, 1972; Kaufman, Gottlieb, Agard, & Kukic, 1975), noncategorical programming (Reynolds, 1979; Reynolds and Balow, 1972), and resource rooms (Hammill, 1972; Iano, 1972). The implications of these concepts for teacher education have also been examined (Blackhurst, Cross, Nelson, & Tawney, 1973; National Support Systems Project, 1980; Paul, Turnbull & Cruickshank, 1977; Reynolds, 1979) with a variety of suggestions and recommendations for teacher training being offered.

Hurley (1971), in a discussion of teacher preparation in special education, discussed four questions that needed to be addressed in planning training programs. One of these questions asks, "What are the areas of knowledge with which the teacher must be equipped?" Hurley answers this question by discussing two broad areas of knowledge which he refers to as "supportive knowledge" and "content knowledge." Hurley offers the opinion that these knowledge areas are essential for all special education teachers. Similar areas of essential knowledge have been referred to as "foundations" (Hanninen, Coleman & Parres, 1977) and "generic" or "core" competencies (Lilly, 1979; Stamm, 1980). These core competencies would appear to be necessary regardless of whether or not a teacher is being trained categorically or noncategorically or is being trained for self-contained or resource service delivery.

For a number of years and particularly since the passage of P.L. 94-142, there has been much discussion about the content of teacher training programs. Several proposals have been made concerning the generic components that should be included in special education teacher training programs (Corrigan, 1976; National Advisory Council on Education Pro-

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fessions Development (NACEPD), 1976; National Support Systems Project (NSSP), 1980; Shores, Cegelka, & Nelson, 1973; Ysseldyke and Algozzine, 1981). The generic curriculum components that have been suggested have ranged from various areas of academic instruction to values education. The purpose of this study was to compare the opinions of teacher educators, classroom teachers and state directors of special education concerning the importance of certain topics in the preparation of special education teachers. All of the suggestions that have appeared in the literature have been largely the opinion of teacher educators and, at that, of a single teacher educator or a small group of teacher educators. This study's objective was to obtain a broader sample of opinion from teacher educators and compare their views with those of state directors and teachers in the field who have a more immediate and concrete experience of training needs.

Method

Using the suggestions offered by Corrigan (1976), the NACEPD (1976), NSSP (1980), Shores et al. (1973), Stamm (1980), and Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1981), a survey instrument was constructed consisting of 25 items. Each item was followed by two, five-point, bi-polar rating scales. One scale was for rating the item relative to undergraduate training programs and the second scale was for rating the item relative to graduate programs.

A list of colleges and universities offering both undergraduate and graduate teacher training programs was compiled from guides to colleges and universities. One hundred institutions of higher education were then randomly selected from the list. The survey of curriculum components was then mailed to special education department chairpersons in the selected institutions. There were a total of 55 replies from department chairpersons. The survey was also sent to the state director of special

education in each of the 50 states. There were a total of 25 replies from state directors.

In addition, a random list of 2,000 special education teachers nationally was obtained from a commercial firm which sells educational mailing lists to direct mail advertisers. A list of 200 special education teachers was then randomly selected from this pool. The curriculum survey was then mailed to this group of teachers in the field. There were a total of 65 replies from teachers.

Results

The original intention had been to test for differences between groups using a one-way ANOVA. However, after the data was collected, it appeared that the data distribution was going to be negatively skewed. Since this would violate the assumption of normal distribution, a non-parametric analysis, the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance of Ranks, was used in addition to the one-way ANOVA. The two analyses produced almost identical results. Since the one-way ANOVA is the more familiar test, the results from it will be reported. A Cochran's C was used to test for homogeneity of variances and P = .394 and P = .025 were obtained for the undergraduate and graduate analyses respectively. A correlated T-test was used to test for within group differences between the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated a high level of agreement between the three groups on the survey items at the undergraduate level (Chart A). There were only two items where significant differences were indicated. State directors rated learning theory (item 17) significantly higher than did teachers. Both state directors and teacher educators rated child development (item 18) significantly higher than did teachers.

The analysis indicated somewhat less agreement between the three groups

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Chart A

Items rated significantly higher between groups at the undergraduate level where the significance level and the higher group are indicated in the appropriate cell in the array.

	17	18
Teacher Educator, Teacher		.05 (TE)
Teacher Educator, State Director		
Teacher, State Director	.05 (SD)	.01 (SD)

17. Learning theory and its application to teaching
18. Child development

Chart B

Items rated significantly higher between groups at the graduate level where the significance level and the higher group are indicated in the appropriate cell in the array.

	1	2	7	13	17	18	19	22	23
TE, T*	.05(TE)	.01(TE)	.05(TE)	.01(TE)	.05(TE)	.05(TE)	.01(TE)	.05(TE)	.05(TE)
TE, SD			.05(TE)						
T, SD					.01(SD)	.05(SD)			

1. Litigation, legislation, regulations, and procedures in special education.
2. Parent support for and involvement in special education.
7. Language development and disorders.
13. Personal development, e.g., problem solving, values education, etc.
17. Learning theory and its application to teaching.
18. Child development.
19. Research methods.
22. Educational assessment of exceptional children.
23. Early childhood education.

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*T = Teacher
TE = Teacher Educator
SD = State Director

on the survey items at the graduate level (Chart B). Nine of the 25 items were significantly different at the graduate level. Teacher educators rated litigation/legislation, parent support, personal development, research methods, educational assessment, and early childhood education (items 1, 2, 13, 19, 22, and 23) significantly higher than teachers. Teacher educators rated language development/disorders (item 7) significantly higher than both teachers and state directors. State directors rated learning theory and child development (items 17 and 18) significantly higher than teachers. Note that teacher educators rate child development (item 18) significantly higher than teachers at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Also, state directors rated learning theory and child development (items 17 and 18) significantly higher than teachers at both the undergraduate and graduate levels (see Charts A and B).

For those items where there was no significant difference between groups, a composite mean has been calculated. These items of agreement have been ranked using the composite means and will be found in Charts C (undergraduate) and D (graduate). A ranking of all items for each of the three groups at both undergraduate and graduate levels is provided in the appendix.

The results of the correlated T-tests between undergraduate and graduate levels indicated that at the undergraduate level (Chart E), all three groups rated methods of teaching reading, math, and language arts and classroom first-aid (items 4, 5, 6, and 25) significantly higher. Teachers and state directors rated behavior modification, functional living skills, and individual differences/instruction (items 8, 10, and 15) significantly higher. Teachers rated child development and early childhood (items 18 and 23) significantly higher. Finally, the state directors

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Chart C

Undergraduate Composite

Rank	Item		Mean
1	4.	Methods of teaching reading.	4.66
2	15.	Individual differences and individualized instruction.	4.57
3	5.	Methods of teaching math.	4.54
4	6.	Methods of teaching language arts.	4.47
5	8.	Behavior modification of exceptional children.	4.45
6	22.	Educational assessment of exceptional children.	4.36
7	10.	Functional living skills, e.g., health, consumerism, etc.	4.23
8	2.	Parent support for and involvement in special education.	4.17
8	7.	Language development and disorders.	4.17
9	11.	Vocational education.	4.05
10	1.	Litigation, legislation, regulations, and procedures in special education.	3.98
11	3.	Individual and group processes.	3.84
12	9.	Curriculum principles and structures.	3.82
12	12.	Consultation, counseling/guidance skills.	3.82
13	16.	Effective use of paraprofessionals.	3.79
14	14.	Learning strategies, e.g., notetaking, test-taking, thinking skills, etc.	3.77
14	25.	Classroom first-aid and emergency procedures.	3.77
15	21.	Principles of tests and measurement.	3.70
16	13.	Personal development, e.g., problem solving, values education, etc.	3.66
17	23.	Early childhood education.	3.50
18	20.	Music/art for the handicapped.	3.47
19	19.	Research methods.	2.94
20	24.	Educating the handicapped child in the least restrictive environment.	2.67

Ranking of items by a composite mean across the three groups for those items that were not significantly different between the groups at the undergraduate level.

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Chart D

Graduate Composite

Rank	Item		Mean
1	15.	Individual differences and individualized instruction.	4.39
2	12.	Consultation, counseling/guidance skills.	4.38
3	21.	Principles of tests and measurement.	4.20
4	9.	Curriculum principles and structures.	4.12
5	11.	Vocational education.	4.10
6	8.	Behavior modification of exceptional children.	4.05
7	24.	Educating the handicapped child in the least restrictive environment.	4.01
8	4.	Methods of teaching reading.	3.98
9	3.	Individual and group processes.	3.85
10	16.	Effective use of paraprofessionals	3.83
11	5.	Methods of teaching math.	3.81
12	10.	Functional living skills, e.g., health, consumerism, etc.	3.79
13	6.	Methods of teaching language arts.	3.71
14	14.	Learning strategies, e.g., notetaking, test-taking, thinking skills, etc.	3.66
15	25.	Classroom first-aid and emergency procedures..	3.23
16	20.	Music/art for the handicapped.	3.18

Ranking of items by a composite mean across the three groups for items that were not significantly different between the groups at the graduate level.

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Chart E

Items rated significantly higher at the undergraduate level by groups.

	4	5	6	7	8	10	15	18	20	23	25
Teacher Educator	*	*	*								*
Teacher	*	*	*		*	*	*	*		*	*
State Director	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*

4. Methods of teaching reading.
5. Methods of teaching math.
6. Methods of teaching language arts.
7. Language development and disorders.
8. Behavior modification of exceptional children.
10. Functional living skills, e.g., health, consumerism, etc.
15. Individual differences and individualized instruction.
18. Child development.
20. Music/art for the handicapped.
23. Early childhood education.
25. Classroom first-aid and emergency procedures.

Chart F

Items rated significantly higher at the graduate level by groups.

	1	2	9	12	17	19	21	22
Teacher Educator	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Teacher	*					*	*	
State Director				*		*		

1. Litigation, legislation, regulations, and procedures in special education.
2. Parent support for and involvement in special education.
9. Curriculum principles and structures.
12. Consultation, counseling/guidance skills.
17. Learning theory and its application to teaching.
19. Research methods.
21. Principles of tests and measurement.
22. Educational assessment of exceptional children.

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rated language development and music/art (items 7 and 20) significantly higher at the undergraduate level.

The results of the correlated T-tests between undergraduate and graduate levels indicated that at the graduate level (Chart F), all three groups rated research methods (item 19) significantly higher. Teacher educators and teachers rated litigation/legislation and principles of tests and measurement (items 1 and 21) significantly higher. Teacher educators and state directors rated consultation/counseling (item 12) significantly higher. Finally, teacher educators rated parent support, curriculum principles, learning theory, and educational assessment (items 2, 9, 17, and 22) significantly higher at the graduate level.

Looking at the composite rankings at the undergraduate level (Chart C), it can be seen that several items, rated higher at the undergraduate level than at the graduate level, are also ranked high (e.g., 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 15). Several items, however, that were rated higher at the undergraduate than at the graduate level are ranked relatively low as can be seen in Chart C (e.g., 20, 23, and 25).

Looking at the composite rankings at the graduate level (Chart D), it can be seen that several items, rated higher at the graduate level than at the undergraduate level, are ranked high (e.g., 9, 12, and 21).

A comparison of the two composite charts (D and E) of items of agreement reveals that all three groups rank relatively high at both the undergraduate and graduate levels the topics of reading (4), behavior modification (8), vocational education (11), and individual differences (15). All three groups rank relatively low at both levels the topics of individual and group processes (3), learning strategies (14), effective use of paraprofessionals (16), music/art (20), and classroom first-aid (25).

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Discussion

The results suggest that teachers viewed learning theory and child development as less important for training teachers at the undergraduate level than did teacher educators. In looking at the relative ranking of all items for the teachers, it would appear that they have a much lower opinion of learning theory than of child development as their relative ranks are 22 and 13 respectively out of 24 ranks (see appendix).

At the graduate level, there seems to be less agreement than at the undergrduate level. Teachers rated litigation/legislation, parent support, personal development, research methods, educational assessment, and early childhood as less important for teacher training programs at the graduate level than did teacher educators. The above topics rank 2, 9, 9, 13, 1, and 19 respectively out of 19 ranks (see appendix). Some of the differences between the teachers and teacher educators can be attributed to the tendency for teacher educators to give higher ratings than teachers as is reflected in their respective ranges 3.05 to 4.80 and 3.06 to 4.33. The two topics that teachers appear to think the least of in terms of the relative ranks of the topics were research methods and early childhood which were 13 and 19 respectively out of 19 ranks (see appendix). However, early childhood ranks 21 out of 23 for teacher educators. Thus, while teacher educators rate early childhood significantly higher than teachers the topic ranks rather low for both groups relative to other topics.

Also, at the graduate level, the findings relative to learning theory and child development at the undergraduate level are repeated. However, at the graduate level, the teachers viewed learning theory and child development as less important than both teacher educators and state directors. The relative ranks of these two items for teachers are

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16 and 14 respectively out of 19 ranks (see appendix). Finally, both teachers and state directors viewed language development as less important for teacher training programs at the graduate level than did teacher educators. The relative ranks for the topic for teachers and state directors being 8 out of 19 ranks and 13 out of 17 ranks respectively (see appendix). Relative to other topics, it would seem that state directors think the least of the topic out of the three groups.

One can only speculate as to why there are these differences of opinion on some of the 25 topics. However, in almost all cases, it is teachers rating an item significantly lower than teacher educators. Of the items discussed above, the ones that seemed to stand out were learning theory, child development, language development, and research methods. Perhaps the teachers' low opinion of these items can be attributed, at least in part, to teacher educators' failure to clearly relate these topics to the instructional problems faced by teachers in the classroom.

In looking at the relative rank of topics, where no significant differences were indicated between the groups, it would appear that the groups agree that methods of teaching reading, behavior modification, vocational education, and individual differences/instruction are ranked relatively high at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. On the other hand, individual/group processes, learning strategies, use of paraprofessionals, teaching music/art, and classroom first-aid are ranked relatively low at both levels.

It appears that items rated significantly higher at the undergraduate level than at the graduate level and that are also ranked high at the undergraduate level tend to be topics with direct classroom applications, e.g., methods of teaching reading, math, and language arts, and behavior

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modification. On the other hand, items rated significantly higher at the graduate level than at the undergraduate level and that are ranked high at the graduate level tend to be topics with a more theoretical orientation, e.g., curriculum principles and principles of tests and measurements.

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APPENDIX

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Teacher Educator (Undergraduate)

Rank	Item		Mean
1	15.	Individual differences and individualized instruction.	4.55
2	4.	Methods of teaching reading.	4.49
3	22.	Educational assessment of exceptional children.	4.36
4	8.	Behavior modification of exceptional children.	4.35
4	18.	Child development.	4.35
5	5.	Methods of teaching math.	4.31
6	7.	Language development and disorders.	4.27
7	2.	Parent support for and involvement in special education.	4.25
8	6.	Methods of teaching language arts.	4.22
9	1.	Litigation, legislation, regulations, and procedures in special education.	4.15
10	10.	Functional living skills, e.g., health, consumerism, etc.	4.07
11	24.	Educating the handicapped child in the least restrictive environment.	4.05
12	17.	Learning theory and its application to teaching.	3.89
13	25.	Classroom first-aid and emergency procedures.	3.87
14	3.	Individual and group processes.	3.85
15	11.	Vocational education.	3.84
16	9.	Curriculum principles and structures.	3.78
17	16.	Effective use of paraprofessionals.	3.69
18	14.	Learning strategies, e.g., notetaking, test-taking, thinking skills, etc.	3.65
18	21.	Principles of tests and measurement.	3.65
19	13.	Personal development, e.g., problem solving, values education, etc.	3.60
20	12.	Consultation, counseling/guidance skills.	3.56
21	23.	Early childhood education.	3.49
22	20.	Music/art for the handicapped.	3.20
23	19.	Research methods.	2.95

Teacher Educator (Graduate)

Rank	Item		Mean
1	1.	Litigation, legislation, regulations, and procedures in special education.	4.80
1	22.	Educational assessment of exceptional children.	4.80
2	15.	Individual differences and individualized instruction.	4.62
3	2.	Parent support for and involvement in special education.	4.53
4	12.	Consultation, counseling/guidance skills.	4.45
5	7.	Language development and disorders.	4.44
5	17.	Learning theory and its application to teaching.	4.44
6	21.	Principles of tests and measurement.	4.40
7	19.	Research methods.	4.36
8	8.	Behavior modification of exceptional children.	4.24
8	9.	Curriculum principles and structures.	4.24
9	4.	Methods of teaching reading.	4.22
10	24.	Educating the handicapped child in the least restrictive environment.	4.20
11	18.	Child development.	4.15
12	3.	Individual and group processes.	4.07
12	11.	Vocational education.	4.07
13	10.	Functional living skills, e.g., health, consumerism, etc.	3.98
14	5.	Methods of teaching math.	3.95
15	13.	Personal development, e.g., problem solving, values education, etc.	3.87
15	16.	Effective use of paraprofessionals.	3.87
16	6.	Methods of teaching language arts.	3.73
17	14.	Learning strategies, e.g., notetaking, test-taking, thinking skills, etc.	3.71
18	23.	Early childhood education.	3.69
19	25.	Classroom first-aid and emergency procedures.	3.45
20	20.	Music/art for the handicapped.	3.03

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Teacher (Undergraduate)

Rank	Item		Mean
1	4.	Methods of teaching reading.	4.62
2	5.	Methods of teaching math.	4.51
3	6.	Methods of teaching language arts.	4.48
4	15.	Individual differences and individualized instruction.	4.35
5	8.	Behavior modification of exceptional children.	4.28
6	11.	Vocational education.	4.26
7	10.	Functional living skills, e.g., health, consumerism, etc.	4.23
8	22.	Educational assessment of exceptional children.	4.15
9	13.	Personal development, e.g., problem solving, values education, etc.	3.97
10	12.	Consultation, counseling/guidance skills.	3.94
11	7.	Language development and disorders.	3.92
12	2.	Parent support for and involvement in special education	3.90
13	18.	Child development.	3.88
14	25.	Classroom first-aid and emergency procedures.	3.85
15	3.	Individual and group processes.	3.82
16	1.	Litigation, legislation, regulations, and procedures in special education.	3.78
16	24.	Educating the handicapped child in the least restrictive environment.	3.78
17	14.	Learning strategies, e.g., notetaking, test-taking, thinking-skills, etc.	3.77
18	16.	Effective use of paraprofessionals.	3.72
19	21.	Principles of tests and measurement.	3.68
20	9.	Curriculum principles and structures.	3.57
21	20.	Music/art for the handicapped.	3.54
22	17.	Learning theory and its application to teaching.	3.40
23	23.	Early childhood education.	3.37
24	19.	Research methods.	3.03

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Teacher (Graduate)

Rank	Item		Mean
1	22.	Educational assessment of exceptional children.	4.33
2	1.	Litigation, legislation, regulations, and procedures in special education.	4.29
2	12.	Consultation, counseling/guidance skills.	4.29
3	11.	Vocational education.	4.20
4	4.	Methods of teaching reading.	4.03
4	15.	Individual differences and individualized instruction.	4.03
5	21.	Principles of tests and measurement.	4.00
6	8.	Behavior modification of exceptional children.	3.98
7	5.	Methods of teaching math.	3.91
7	9.	Curriculum principles and structures.	3.91
8	7.	Language development and disorders	3.88
9	2.	Parent support for and involvement in special education.	3.85
9	13.	Personal development, e.g., problem solving, values education, etc.	3.85
10	3.	Individual and group processes.	3.83
10	6.	Methods of teaching language arts.	3.83
11	10.	Functional living skills, e.g., health, consumerism, etc.	3.72
12	24.	Educating the handicapped child in the least restrictive environment.	3.71
13	16.	Effective use of paraprofessionals.	3.65
13	19.	Research methods.	3.65
14	18.	Child development.	3.55
15	14.	Learning strategies, e.g., notetaking, test-taking, thinking skills, etc.	3.54
16	17.	Learning theory and its application to teaching.	3.37
17	25.	Classroom first-aid and emergency procedures.	3.28
18	20.	Music/art for the handicapped.	3.26
19	23.	Early childhood education.	3.06

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State Director (Undergraduate)

Rank	Item		Mean
1	4.	Methods of teaching reading.	4.88
2	5.	Methods of teaching math.	4.80
2	15.	Individual differences and individualized instruction.	4.80
3	8.	Behavior modification of exceptional children.	4.72
3	6.	Methods of teaching language arts.	4.72
4	18.	Child development.	4.60
5	22.	Educational assessment of exceptional children.	4.56
6	10.	Functional living skills, e.g., health, consumerism, etc.	4.40
7	2.	Parent support for and involvement in special education.	4.36
8	7.	Language development and disorders.	4.32
9	24.	Educating the handicapped child in the least restrictive environment.	4.20
10	9.	Curriculum principles and structures.	4.12
10	17.	Learning theory and its application to teaching.	4.12
11	11.	Vocational education.	4.04
12	1.	Litigation, legislation, regulations, and procedures in special education.	4.00
13	12.	Consultation, counseling/guidance skills.	3.96
13	16.	Effective use of paraprofessionals.	3.96
14	14.	Learning strategies, e.g., notetaking, test-taking, thinking skills, etc.	3.88
15	3.	Individual and group processes.	3.84
16	21.	Principles of tests and measurement.	3.76
17	20.	Music/art for the handicapped.	3.68
18	23.	Early childhood education.	3.64
19	25.	Classroom first-aid and emergency procedures.	3.60
20	13.	Personal development, e.g., problem solving, values education, etc.	3.40
21	19.	Research methods.	3.84

State Director (Graduate)

Rank	Item		Mean
1	21.	Principles of tests and measurement.	4.60
2	15.	Individual differences and individualized instruction.	4.52
3	12.	Consultation, counseling/guidance skills.	4.40
3	17.	Learning theory and its application to teaching.	4.40
4	19.	Research methods.	4.32
5	18.	Child development.	4.24
6	1.	Litigation, legislation, regulations, and procedures in special education.	4.20
6	9.	Curriculum principles and structures.	4.20
6	21.	Principles of tests and measurement.	4.20
7	2.	Parent support for and involvement in special education.	4.16
8	24.	Educating the handicapped child in the least restrictive environment.	4.12
9	11.	Vocational education.	4.04
10	16.	Effective use of paraprofessionals.	3.96
11	8.	Behavior modification of exceptional children.	3.92
12	14.	Learning strategies, e.g., notetaking, test-taking, thinking skills, etc.	3.72
12	23.	Early childhood education.	3.72
13	4.	Methods of teaching reading.	3.68
13	7.	Language development and disorders.	3.68
13	10.	Functional living skills, e.g., health, consumerism, etc.	3.68
14	3.	Individual and group processes.	3.64
14	13.	Personal development, e.g., problem solving, values education, etc.	3.64
15	5.	Methods of teaching math.	3.56
15	6.	Methods of teaching language arts.	3.56
16	20.	Music/art for the handicapped.	3.24
17	25.	Classroom first-aid and emergency procedures.	2.96

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